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### **Review of *Poor Women in Rich Countries: The Feminization of Poverty over the Life Course*. Gertrude Schaffner Goldberg (Ed.). Reviewed by Jennifer R. Zelnick.**

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significant amounts of public money on welfare programs, are also excluded from the book, as are other Middle Eastern countries which have quite extensive statutory provision. India is also ignored but, despite the persistence of poverty and deprivation, the country has extensive and quite innovative statutory social welfare programs. Although these and other countries may not fit the typological classification used in this book, their statutory welfare programs are as varied and interesting as those of the countries that are included. They surely deserve scholarly attention.

These realities should provoke welfare state scholars to approach the study of government social policies and programs through a different lens that does not seek to impose an artificial quasi-paradigmatic construct on reality but views it from an alternative *emic* perspective that is based on a grounded understanding of reality. Instead of attempting to make phenomena conform to externally imposed artificial constructs, an approach of this kind seeks to understand reality as it is experienced by people themselves. Less reliance on the welfare state construct would not only enrich the study of statutory welfare but welfare phenomena in general, and foster the emergence of an academic field of inquiry that promotes a fuller and more convincing understanding of social well-being. This criticism should not, however, detract from the book's overall value and significant contributions to the social policy literature. Its discussion of the many issues and challenges facing statutory welfare programs around the world today, its comprehensiveness, concise presentation of complex issues and scholarly analyses make it a valuable resource which should be widely consulted.

Gertrude Schaffner Goldberg, Ed. (2010). *Poor Women in Rich Countries: The Feminization of Poverty over the Life Course*. New York: Oxford University Press, \$39.95 (paperback).

In *Poor Women in Rich Countries: The Feminization of Poverty over the Life Course*, Professor Goldberg and colleagues revisit the topic of the feminization of poverty in advanced industrialized countries first undertaken in earlier co-edited books,

*The Feminization of Poverty: Only in America?* (1990), and *Diminishing Welfare: A Cross-National Study of Social Provision* (2002), an analysis in the context of welfare state restructuring and retrenchment.

Like these earlier volumes, this study uses cross-national comparisons to investigate whether the feminization of poverty, an over-representation of women among the poor, is an international phenomenon as well as to assess the impact of global economic trends on the welfare state in different political and cultural contexts. In addition to providing an analysis of how changes in the economy and social policy have had an impact on women's poverty over the past decade, the new volume incorporates a life course perspective by extending the inquiry to focus on poverty among lone elderly women and the policies intended to address it.

Eight rich countries—Sweden, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada, Italy, Japan, and the United States—are discussed in separate chapters written by native scholars. Country-specific chapters are organized around 4 factors that shape the condition for women's poverty: labor market conditions (e.g. labor force participation, unemployment, occupational segregation, gender wage gap); equalization policies (policies and services such as childcare that facilitate more equal labor market participation); social welfare (income support that compensates for lower wages, unpaid care demands); and demographics (including minority race, ethnicity and/or immigrant status). Goldberg contributes an introductory chapter that contextualizes the current studies' themes and methodology and two concluding chapters that summarize and synthesize the material, with special focus on the topic of lone elderly women across the study countries.

This ambitious book is based on excellent scholarship. Each chapter is thorough and written by authors with expertise in analyzing social welfare data and the political and social trends that shape them. For example, Ute Klammer's discussion of how German unification brought together East German women with a stronger position in the workforce and the support of public childcare centers with West German women whose position was shaped by a conservative "male breadwinner" welfare state model is interesting both in terms

of German trends and for comparing welfare "regimes." It is also interesting for a U.S. reader to ponder Claude Martin's description of the French welfare system, enacted in 1976 to allow single mothers an option to spend more time at home than in the workplace, given the shift towards pushing single mothers into the workforce in other rich countries. The "ethnicization of poverty" discussed by Sainsbury and Morissens in their chapter on Sweden is also a salient factor in several of the other chapter studies, pointing to limits of even the most successful welfare state models in reducing poverty for lone women in the context of the global labor market.

Goldberg's two final chapters synthesize data on single mothers and lone elders, building on the life course perspective and utilizing a common relative poverty standard of less than 50% of median disposable income (rather than each country's definition of poverty). Using this standard, an average of 1/3 of lone mothers and 1/5 of lone older women live in poverty in rich countries. The case studies in the book confirm that poverty is feminized among the lone elderly, though unlike the case of lone mothers, "regime" types (liberal, conservative, or social democratic welfare states) did not predict the level of elderly poor women. Briefly summarizing the policy comparisons is daunting, and attempting it made me wonder if a more concise presentation of conclusions was possible. However, the reader who wants to seriously consider the integrated role of labor market, income support, and child/elder care policies in the context of social attitudes and institutional practices towards women, racial/ethnic minorities, and immigrants will be rewarded.

The book succeeds in providing data and largely bridging the gaps among data differences and different poverty measures among countries, and it contains rich, detailed discussions of the countries' political and social contexts. The approach of having each case study deal with a consistent set of questions is an effective methodology for a case study comparison. This is an excellent book for scholars in the field of social welfare policy and for graduate level courses on social welfare policy.

The research for this volume was completed just before the economic crisis that began in 2008, though some of the

chapters do comment on the immediate effects of financial collapse and recession. What the authors are unable to comment on is the longer-term impacts of these phenomena. The book provides an excellent baseline for another study on those themes. Now more than ever, researchers and scholars need to work as advocates in social policy; Dr. Goldberg's career of solid work in this area is an excellent example for young scholars.

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Neil Gilbert, Nigel Parton, & Marit Skivenes, Eds. (2011). *Child Protection Systems: International Trends and Orientations*. New York: Oxford University Press, \$55.00 (hardcover).

*Child Protection Systems* is a well-written, thought-provoking work that updates *Combatting Child Abuse: International Perspectives and Trends* (1997, N. Gilbert, Ed.). *Child Protection Systems* tracks changes over the last 10-15 years to the child protection systems of the U.S., Canada, England, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway, Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands. All these nations have expanded their child protection systems, both in scope and in cost. Despite each system's unique character, all have been influenced by globalization, capital and labor mobility, and economic interdependence among nations. Furthermore, all are touched by growing neo-liberal attitudes, which increasingly reject the collective "welfare state" idea in favor of the stance that individuals must be self-reliant, approaching their lives as a "do-it-yourself" project. Almost all ten countries have dealt with gripping cases that provoked media and public outcry, and generated new or refined child protection laws. The editors assert that data related to out-of-home placements from the various nations are hard to compare because of differences in the way they are collected and assessed, as well as because of differences in how they variously define common terms. That said, the trend in out-of-home placements generally appears to be moving up. With the exception of the U.S., all these nations have adopted and are influenced by the U.N. Convention of the Rights of the Child.